

INFORMATION REPORT

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USSR (Latvian SSR)

REPORT NO.

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Living Conditions in and near Riga

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REFERENCES

THE SOURCE EVALUATIONS IN THIS REPORT ARE DEFINITIVE.
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(FOR KEY SEE REVERSE)

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1. The Central Market in Riga was in operation every day, except possibly Sunday. Source hitchhiked to the market with another girl [redacted], riding in an army truck. They took eggs to the market and stayed in Riga two days, living with relatives. There was no document check on the way to Riga from Skaistkalne, nor were documents checked on the market. However, milk and meat had to be submitted to a check as to their quality. Persons wishing to sell something had to pay an admission fee of four or five rubles. This was required by the market watchmen, not by the militia. Eggs sold for about one ruble each. Sugar was sold by the glassful, one glass costing five rubles. Butter was then 25 rubles for a half-pound, or 625 grams, and source insists that this was the price. Market days in Bauska were Wednesdays and Fridays, or Saturdays. Bauska marketplace was fenced in and had three entrances. The fee for admission was less than in Riga. In Skaistkalne market day was Thursday.
2. The Brunava area was predominately Catholic; the Skaistkalne cloister was dissolved in 1950, and the monks sent away. A dental clinic was established in the cloister. Source visited the Catholic church in Brunava several times, and never noticed that the priest's sermon, given in Latvian, was antagonistic toward the regime. The priest lived in a house near the church, probably the property of the parish, but source did not know the salary of the priest or the amount of taxes paid by the parish. This priest came to source's house to baptize a child.
3. [redacted] The chairman of the kolkhoz was anti-Communist. He was helpful to the German refugees, and it was known that he had served in the German navy during the war, though he had not been in a PW camp. The chairman had been denounced several times but had not been removed from his position. He did not show his feelings toward the regime openly, but many people knew about his attitude. In the chairman's house there was electricity and a telephone, but not in the houses of the other kolkhozniki.

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4. One night in winter [redacted] one of the local militiamen in Brunava was drunk and wanted source to go out with him, and started shooting up the house where source lived when she refused. This man subsequently confiscated all source's documents and photographs. The next day source went to Bauska and lodged a complaint in the office of the rayon militia, located in a big red and white house opposite the hospital. There were several militiamen in the office who spoke Latvian and German as well as Russian. The militiamen were questioned and the guilty party was transferred to another place. When the Germans were registered for repatriation, about two months before the event took place, the registration was handled by a man in civilian clothes who spoke perfect German, and did not appear to be connected with the Bauska militia office. He was accompanied by the local militiamen and the registration was carried out in Brunava, not in Bauska. Source was issued a passport with a photograph, and retained this document until the final check of the repatriates at Chernyakhovsk.
5. Source associated with Latvian girls and learned Latvian songs, among others the folksong Put Vejini. In 1950 St. John's Day was officially celebrated; other official holidays were 7 November, 1 May, and New Year's Day. Latvians also celebrated Christmas and Easter privately, and many songs, mostly Latvian ones, were sung on those holidays. Source recited two of the songs which are probably prewar and slightly incorrect due to their being passed from one person to the other orally. The one, Mexico Road, is a dance, and the other a gypsy romance, The Fire in the Darkness.

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